

SOLIDARITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

No lasting success can be expected in promoting sustainable development without global solidarity. The tenth UNCTAD session adopted on February 18, 2000. The Bangkok Declaration: Global Dialogue and Dynamic Engagement, which stated that solidarity and a strong sense of moral responsibility must be the guiding light of national and international policy. Solidarity was proclaimed as a fundamental value of international relations in the UN Millennium Declaration of September 8, 2000 and in the UN World Summit Outcome of September 16, 2005.

However, no tangible progress has been made in correlating the duty of solidarity with the major objectives of sustainable development. Efforts are continuing under the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005 -2014).

Solidarity should be incorporated in national constitutions. Education curricula should include provisions for teaching global solidarity. The UN Secretary-General's reports on the implementation of the UN Summit's declarations should contain sections on the progress achieved in advancing global solidarity and should encourage collective reflection under the motto *Opus Solidaritatis Pax* (Peace is the fruit of solidarity). Further consideration must be given to establishing a World Solidarity Institutions Organization, as suggested in 2004. There is an urgent need for multilateral diplomacy to contribute to the universal acceptance of global solidarity as an imperative prerequisite of authentic sustainable development.

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1. Idealistic or Realistic Approach?

The relationship between solidarity and sustainable development can be realistically assessed only on the basis of relevant events, facts and documents. The concept of solidarity is inseparable from the concept of community and should be treated in an universal context, having in mind that the duty of solidarity is an imperative prerequisite of the irreversible process of globalization which is a multidimensional process of socio-economic transformation at planetary level. The concept of sustainable development is recognized in specialized literature as being a multi-faceted one involving scientific, economic, political, social, legal and institutional dimensions.

On June 16, 2006, the European Council of the European Union (EU), following the United Nations' (UN) recommendations, adopted a single, coherent strategy on how the EU will more effectively live up to its long-standing commitment to meet the challenges of sustainable development. This document reaffirms the need for global solidarity and recognizes the importance of strengthening common work with partners outside the EU, including rapidly developing countries which will have a significant impact on global sustainable development. It also recalls that education is a prerequisite for promoting behavioral changes and providing all citizens with the key competences needed to achieve sustainable development.

Success in reversing unsustainable trends on the world arena will, to a large extent, depend on high-quality education for sustainable development at all levels, including education on issues such as the sustainable use of energies and transport systems, sustainable consumption and production patterns, health, media competence and responsible global citizenship.(1)

Thailand strongly supported Japan's initiative at the UN to proclaim the period 2005-2014 as the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), for which UNESCO is

the lead agency.

As summarized by the UNESCO Secretariat, ESD is a vision of education that seeks to empower people to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future. There are four major thrusts to begin the work of ESD: (a) improve basic education, (b) reorient existing education to address sustainable development, (c) develop public understanding and awareness, and (d) provide training for all sectors of society including business, industry, and governments.

In this complex process there are many different stakeholders: (a) Governments and inter-governmental bodies (b) Mass media (3) Civil society and non-governmental organizations (c) The private sector (d) Formal education institutions.

Formulated in a nutshell the objectives of the UN Decade of ESD are to: (a) Facilitate networking linkages, exchange and interaction among stakeholders in ESD (b) Foster an increased quality of teaching and learning in ESD (c) Help countries make progress towards and attain the Millennium Development Goals through ESD efforts (d) Provide countries with new opportunities to incorporate ESD into education reform efforts.(2)

From the perspective of solidarity, the topic under consideration has an interesting history whose significant elements deserve to be recalled. At the First Summit of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in Algiers in 1975, the high participants of this important international institution, in a Solemn Declaration, reaffirmed "the natural solidarity which unites their countries with the other developing countries in their struggle to overcome under-development."

This First Summit resulted in the establishment of the 'OPEC Fund for International Development', which was specifically set up to promote South-South solidarity through cooperation between OPEC Member Countries and other developing countries, primarily by helping provide the financial resources those countries need

to realize their economic and social development goals.

Since its formation over 30 years ago, the Fund has made great strides. It played a significant role in the establishment of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), channeling \$861 million in contributions from Member Countries towards the agency's initial capital and first replenishment, and its spectrum of projects continually broadened: from sugar plantations in Sudan to syringe factories in Vietnam; from fighting HIV/AIDS to enhancing literacy levels. At the end of January 2006, the Fund's total approved commitments stood at almost US\$8 billion. Its focus is now on energy, social and economic security as a means for achieving sustainable development. (3)

At non-governmental level an interesting and instructive example can be evoked from relevant activities organized in Switzerland. Solidarity for the Future: The North/South Conference for Sustainable Development took place in Berne, Switzerland, from 25-29 May 1998. The conference, organized by the Swiss Coalition of Development Organizations, gathered more than 900 participants from 40 countries, including political and economic leaders and representatives from civil society and the scientific community.

The objectives of the conference were to address aspects of political, economic and social change that will shape North/South relations in the 21st century, give broad public exposure to the concerns of the South with respect to solidarity and sustainable development, and formulate demands for sound future development. Each day the conference addressed different themes related to solidarity and sustainable development

P.V. Rajagopal, Secretary of the Gandhi Peace Foundation (India), and Vandana Shiva, winner of the Right Livelihood Award (India), as well as other participants emphasized the fact that many pertinent questions deserved to be answered: what does solidarity mean for the domestic and foreign policy of developed and

developing countries; what forms could solidarity take in civil society in the North and the South; and what duties should be assumed by non-governmental organizations working for solidarity, in particular on solidarity with the forgotten people? How to promote active rather than theoretical solidarity, knowing it is not easy to achieve, as the present educational system creates intelligence but kills emotion?

From the great variety of opinions formulated on the above questions, some are highly cogent for the topic under consideration. Solidarity requires understanding highly complex situations. Priority attention should be focused on programs on the poorest of the poor, ensuring control over means of production and joining the millions struggling for survival through active solidarity.

Globalization is driving a wedge between North/South solidarity. Examples are numerous. Action is needed against the propagation of a global monoculture based on the conception that a child thirsty for clean water really needs Coca-Cola and a young girl dreaming of going to school really wants a pair of Nikes. Not taking more than one needs is the basis of solidarity, leaving enough for ecosystems, other species and all people's livelihoods. Humanity must create a solidarity that seeks freedom in inclusive, non-violent ways and respects and embraces diversity.

While trying to answer the question *Solidarity: Between Altruism and Self-interest?*, the Conference acknowledged a tradition of solidarity in Swiss foreign policy, but determined that it is obsolete today. Participants focused on the need for a **new solidarity** that takes into account economic and environmental aspects, which are at the center of the solidarity debate.

Under the issue *A Closer Look at Solidarity: Conditions Formulated in the South* participants considered establishing reciprocal systems of solidarity, allowing the South to set priorities and addressing political debates before developing action plans. They called on the South to encourage grassroots movements to apply

political pressure at the national level and on the North to lobby governments to halt capital flight, influence financial institutions and encourage fair trade.

In order to answer the question *Who Dictates the Agenda for North/South Solidarity?* some participants outlined a number of principles meant to serve as a basis for North/South solidarity, including: partnership; transparency; honesty; clear definition of roles and objectives; declaration of all parties' interests; professionalism; sustainability; community-initiated and beneficiary-driven action; self-reliance; resource sharing; moral solidarity; and South/South and North/North collaboration.

The panel also addressed the very practical question: "*What does the Foundation for Solidarity mean for Switzerland?*" and discussed the establishment of a Foundation that would be based on a trust of \$7 billion gifted by the Swiss government, allowing it an annual budget of \$350 million from interest.

What is the history of this project? In March 1997, the Swiss government advanced the idea of creating a long-term Solidarity Foundation for humanitarian aid at home and abroad. This undertaking, endorsed by the Swiss National Bank, would be aimed at offering a dignified future to real or potential victims of poverty, hardship, and violence, and would include aid to victims of the Holocaust. The Foundation would support long-term projects, finance emergency aid, and award a Solidarity Prize. Its work would be financed from the proceeds of un-invested gold reserves of the National Bank. The financing aspects of the Foundation were scheduled for public referendum. However, the Swiss government was embarrassed when voters killed its plan to set up a Swiss Solidarity Foundation using "excess" gold. In the September 22, 2002 referendum, 52% voted against the plan, with many saying that, given the international economic climate, it would be better to keep the gold.

The final day of the Bern Conference of 1998

was devoted to youth under the theme "Forward to 2050". Some participants asserted that sustainable development can only be understood if we think of today's youth and their role in the future in the light of solidarity. While people know what should be done, there is no sufficient political will to take appropriate action. Youth may bring new ideas to decision makers and demand their right to a sustainable future. Solidarity requires an honest commitment to action, as there is a quite visible tendency to dwell on one's own problems and ignore those of others with more pressing needs.

The Bern Conference emphasized the need to make children aware of different cultures, beginning as early as kindergarten. Some participants underscored that cultural diversity enriches humanity and lauded the recommendations on that matter as a bridge to solidarity in the future. A major conclusion of the Conference was directly related to the importance of explaining to decision makers that solidarity is not just charity, but an investment in our common future, and, in that context, it was re-affirmed that there is a need to re-evaluate our ideas and ideals and make changes in everyday life to bring about a better world. (4) "Success requires solidarity," asserted Kofi Annan, the UN Secretary-General in 2001. (5)

At the inauguration of the international conference on "Solidarity and Globalization: innovative financing for development and against pandemics", held in Paris from February 28 to March 1, 2006, French President Jacques Chirac stated: "Following years of adhering to the widespread illusion that globalizing the economy would be enough to solve all development problems, the international community is finally accepting the need for solidarity."

On July 4, 2006 the actual stage of the French initiative was presented in detail. France is now charging travelers a new tax on their airline tickets, amounting to a surcharge of between \$1.25 and \$50. The French government claims the

new tax is earmarked to help the world's poor. The airline surcharge, which is based on the traveler's ticket price, came into effect at the beginning of July 2006. The hope is that eventually all wealthy nations will participate in this international tax plan.

The new tax, pushed through the French parliament by President Jacques Chirac and backed by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, is being hailed or criticized by many throughout the globe. It is being hyped by the Globalists as the "Solidarity Tax."

The airlines will collect the money and turn it over to the French government which will then transfer the proceeds to the UN. There are also discussions of eventually having the airlines submit funds collected directly to the UN.

The money from the tax on flights from France to countries throughout the world is expected to raise over \$250 million a year for an international fund to provide the poor nations of the world with treatments for AIDS, tuberculosis and other deadly diseases.

Following the above mentioned international conference in Paris in March 2006, French officials said 10 other countries had signed up for the Solidarity Tax: Brazil, Chile, Cyprus, Congo, Ivory Coast, Jordan, Madagascar, Mauritius, Nicaragua and Norway. Gabon has since joined the list, and was the only other country to start imposing the surcharge by July 1, 2006. France hopes more countries will do the same. In March 2006, a number of other nations said they would impose a similar tax, although only a few EU nations signed on.

The United States, Canada and Germany strongly oppose the above levy, and many airlines have complained that it will add to the already high cost of air travel at a time of rising fuel prices. The United Kingdom said although it supported the aid package, it would divert money from other sources.

While the UN and France attempt to paint the tax as merely a small part of a charitable pro-

gram, critics see it as another step in creating an international tax and as another overture to one-world government. They also say that its purpose is the globalized redistribution of wealth or the creation of an international welfare state.

Beyond any criticism, the "air-ticket solidarity levy" has been vigorously championed by France, who admits that it sees this as trailblazing for "globalization." (6)

This is an encouraging fact justifying some optimistic assessments. However, global solidarity is far from being a visible spontaneous phenomenon. It is still on the waiting list of great ideals.

We are not living in times of real sustainable development, because solidarity among humans is not yet a general practice. We live in an era of global vulnerabilities, discontinuities and perplexities. More than one-fourth of humankind lives in conditions of chronic poverty. Famine, military conflicts, terrorism, human-rights abuses, environmental degradation and climate change, pandemics, all threaten human dignity and the very survival of humanity. The challenges facing us are severe and inescapable.

During the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development (2002), in the absence of universally accepted definitions of solidarity and sustainable development, the world leaders offered a working interpretation of broad concepts: development is sustainable if future generations inherit a quality of environment at least equal to that inherited by their predecessors. It presupposes the simultaneous application of three fundamental principles: the precautionary principle, adopting a preventive rather than remedial approach; the principle of solidarity between all peoples of the world and between the present generations and those to come; and the principle of people participation in decision-making. (7)

Beyond any ritualistic invocations, the duty of solidarity is an imperative prerequisite of the irreversible process of globalization. In the opinion of President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa, the imperative of human solidarity demands that

all countries must strive for a shared prosperity. A global human society based on poverty for many and prosperity for a few is unsustainable. The survival of everybody requires a universal consensus to ensure that there is no longer any river that divides our common habitat into poor and wealthy parts. (8)

The Political Declaration and the 65-page Implementation Plan adopted by consensus on 4 September 2002 by the Johannesburg World Summit specifically recognized the importance of building human solidarity. (9) The basic philosophy of recommendations is unquestionable. Sustainable development includes such diverse aspects as peace, ecological integrity and human rights, and requires us to reassess even our concept of “progress”. Therefore, we urgently need an ethos of solidarity because all of us are interdependent one from the other. We coexist in the same cosmos. Solidarity is found at the root of the process of humanization. “Solidarity allowed the jump from bestiality to humanity”. (10)

2. Solidarity in crisis

Against any humanistic expectations, solidarity as a generally visible practice is now in crisis. A crisis is a situational change which creates a threat to fundamental values. In different addresses, the UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan emphasized that the current world is threatened, among other things, by a crisis of global solidarity. (11)

This seems to be a profound crisis, as at present the very concept of solidarity has lost much of its original meaning. The UN's appeals for global solidarity are too often ignored, in spite of the fact that the world organization with its current 192 members is in itself an embodiment of institutionalized solidarity which is affected by this crisis.

Solidarity is frequently described as a universal value reflected in a union of interests, purposes or sympathies. It is also defined as caring for oth-

ers, respecting and sharing their feelings. It exists wherever people work together towards a common goal. In spite of some divergent interpretations, solidarity is recognized as a complex concept and cannot be reduced to a reactive manifestation of vague compassion for the misfortunes of other people.

If we address the facts, the necessity of global solidarity is more than obvious in a world where one-fifth of the population survives on less than \$1 day, where some 20 countries are involved in armed conflicts, and where poverty brings untold suffering to millions of people. Is it possible to remain indifferent while witnessing these negative phenomena?

Many international conferences dealt with this crucial question. However, the architects of globalization have failed to give practical answers based on the requirements of global solidarity. Therefore the UN is dramatically called upon by the Millennium Declaration of September 8, 2000 to be more actively involved in energetic efforts to build a more united and just world. The UN should develop a clear image of what's wrong and why, should offer visions of positive alternatives and realistic solutions and inspiration for strategies to deal with global issues and to combat planetary vulnerability.

Many positive initiatives are waiting for a robust implementation. To fight the crisis of global solidarity means overcoming today's predominant individualistic mentality, formulating specific commitments to bind all peoples together as members of a common family and make it unconceivable for wealthy nations to look with indifference upon the hunger, misery and poverty of other nations.

A lasting peace cannot be preserved so long as flagrant economic and social divides persist. There can be no real progress towards true world peace without the simultaneous development of all humanity in the spirit of global solidarity, rooted in foundations of democracy, dignity, sustainability, and cooperation.

Opus solidaritatis pax - Peace is the fruit of solidarity. This is a vital and topical conclusion expressed and re-affirmed with vigor by the Holy See. (12)

A radical change is not on the agenda for the near future. The world is still passing through a chaotic phase, filled with both risks and promises. Yet, the most vulnerable groups in the midst of turbulences are often the most ignored. Consequently, genuine solidarity requires on an urgency basis common action to address the fundamental causes of injustice and the sources of violence in our era.

Perplexities are numerous and highly visible. In spite of a vicious cycle of material poverty in the least developed countries, there is a paradoxical absence of imagination among many developed countries leading to a failure of empathy and generating an inability to recognize in practical terms the multifaceted consequences of underdevelopment.

To complete the picture, the challenges that confront all countries, without exception, are massive. The forces ranged against global progress are formidable. Therefore, in keeping with a responsible approach, it is not enough to respond to them with scattered resistance and by adopting resolutions inspired by political rhetoric. It is necessary to act with tenacity in a spirit of proactive solidarity. This collective action must be more sustained, more structured, more coherent, more organized in all its forms of manifestation. It is this kind of proactive solidarity that the developing countries are trying to promote by using as much as they can the instruments of multilateralism to combat apathy and indifference. This is a crucial combat, as the world community has not yet been able to establish a globalization process based on solidarity, which might lead to viable solutions. A strong political impetus at planetary level for promoting global solidarity is still on the waiting list of priorities. (13)

3. A 21st Century Pillar

Existing difficulties and possible solutions cannot be ignored. In an admirable premonitory spirit, on 10 January 2000, the Holy Father Pope John Paul II stated that “the century now beginning ought to be the century of solidarity”. (14) On 18 February 2000 UNCTAD X, a most significant event in the field of multilateral economic diplomacy, adopted on behalf of 190 countries the Bangkok Declaration which stipulates that “Solidarity and a strong sense of responsibility must be the guiding light of national and international policy. They are not only ethical imperatives, but also prerequisites for a prosperous, peaceful and secure world based on true partnership”. (15)

These fundamental requirements must be placed in a proper context. Justice and welfare, freedom and equal chances are normative and universal preconditions for an adequate implementation of organic solidarity. The everyday practice of solidarity is of decisive importance. Authentic global solidarity and genuine partnerships should guide the collective efforts of all peoples to forge a world in which every human being may exercise his/her basic rights to live, to love, to hope, to dream, without any fear, as terror would have no chance to exist and flourish. That would not be a utopia, but merely an image of globalization with a human face in a century of solidarity.

The 2000 UN Millennium Declaration re-affirmed in a coherent context certain fundamental/universal values as being essential to international relations in the twenty-first century. The list of values is instructive by its content as it includes freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature and shared responsibility.

Additional annotations for each value are also of a paramount importance. The UN Millennium Summit found that in keeping with solidarity, global challenges must be managed in a way that distributes the costs and burdens fairly in accordance with the basic principles of equity and

social justice. Those who suffer, or benefit least, deserve help from those who benefit most. (16) The global context in which solidarity must become operational should not be underestimated.

As rightly pointed out by UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, universal values are not proclaimed in the UN documents to serve philosophers or theologians, but to help people live their lives and organize their societies at the national and global levels. Therefore, there is an urgent need for mechanisms of cooperation strong enough to insist on universal values, but flexible enough to help people put them into effect under modalities that they can actually apply in their national and cultural contexts. In this regard, the UN system as a whole is expected to offer an exemplary leadership in giving tangibility to the universal values at the planetary level. (17)

Making global solidarity an integral part of world politics is an urgent task. For that, constructive leadership is essential in the UN and in all other international organizations. More generosity is expected from developed countries. This is being repeated on many occasions for cogent reasons. It should be, indeed, recognized that promoting solidarity is not just a simple humanitarian task for a few countries and cannot be confined to occasional small offerings inspired by charity. A suffering world must find a central place in the immediate preoccupations and national agendas of every developed country. These are vital matters.

From this perspective, serving solidarity is the most important heritage the EU can share at planetary level. Solidarity exercised within and beyond its borders is considered to be the soul of the EU and is amply reflected in a Constitution which is not yet ratified by all the EU's members, but which may become an important source of inspiration for globalizing solidarity during the present century. (18)

At a practical level, solidarity can express itself in many ways. It is the technical and financial assistance provided to countries

fighting natural disasters, whether floods or fire. It is reflected by the thousands of volunteers working to alleviate extreme poverty and disease in some of the most desolate parts of Africa. Life itself shows that solidarity is a value that has concrete meanings and many expressions, as it ties us together. It forms part of our shared identity and fosters the will to act for our common good, and a fairer and safer world.

Assessed in holistic terms, solidarity is a universal concept and connotes protection and security for all. That postulates continuous positive action. Yet, the world community has not been able to establish a globalization process based on solidarity, which might lead to viable solutions. Lack of solidarity is the major cause of many major difficulties we are facing today. No lasting success can be expected in fighting terrorism, addressing poverty, climate change, biodiversity, HIV/AIDS, good governance, protection of human rights, etc., without global solidarity. This must be one of the founding pillars upon which the 21st century is built.

To produce visible effects, globalization and solidarity must permanently go hand in hand. Competitiveness and solidarity, while being current trends, should not be artificially opposed to each other. Indeed, while competition goes on, only an ethic of authentic solidarity can lead to a fully human form of globalization. It is in this context that the Standing Committee of the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats adopted on November 30, 2004 the Strasbourg Declaration on the role of the Bern Convention in the preservation of biological diversity. That document re-affirmed the determination to promote the expression and adoption of a political consensus on the values attached to the fundamental entitlement to live in a healthy environment and to benefit from the sustainable use of biological diversity, while guaranteeing sustainable devel-

opment and solidarity for present and future generations.

On January 21, 2003 in a statement on the accession of new Member States to the EU by the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Community there is an explicit call on the enlarged EU to serve the global common good by applying the same commitment to just trade, sustainable development and solidarity with the poorest regions of the world as they have within the EU. The Catholic Church is and has always been supportive of the efforts to bring lasting peace and well-being to Europe through a "community of solidarity" based on economic and political integration. The same document reminds that the EU is founded on universal values and commends to political leaders and all current and future citizens of the EU hope, trust and, above all, solidarity. For the new Member States, the benefits of accession may not become evident immediately, and they will therefore be called upon to recognize and respect the solidarity demonstrated by the current Member States, even if its effects are not immediately quantifiable. That is valid also for other regional and global organizations, including first of all the UN.

In the traditional Message for the World Day of Peace at the beginning of the New Year 2006, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI said the UN must become a more efficient instrument for promoting the values of justice, solidarity and peace in the world. To that end, it is vital that the momentum of the UN reform is sustained and re-energized. (19)

4. Realistic Expectations

Is it realistic to expect significant movements for promoting the duty of solidarity as an imperative prerequisite of sustainable development?

The Leaders of Asian and African countries, who gathered in Jakarta, Indonesia on 22-23 April 2005 for the Asian-African Summit to reinvigorate the Spirit of Bandung as

enshrined in the Final Communique of the 1955 Asian-African Conference and to chart the future cooperation between the two continents towards a New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP) offered an optimistic answer. They considered the item "Rethinking Solidarity in Global Society" and expressed the conviction that cooperation between sub-regional organizations, through sharing experiences and best practices, can propel growth and sustainable development.

For that a promising institutional background is growing up between the two continents. It is illustrated *inter alia* by the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD), China-Africa Cooperation Forum (CACF), India-Africa Cooperation, Indonesia-Brunei Darussalam sponsored Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation, Vietnam-Africa Business Forum, and the Smart Partnership Initiative and the Langkawi International Dialogue.

The Leaders acknowledged the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as the African Union's program for poverty eradication, socio-economic development and growth and expressed support for it. Moreover, they declared, as an expression of a new political will, the establishment of a New Asian-African Strategic Partnership (NAASP) as a framework to build a bridge between Asia and Africa covering three broad areas of partnership, namely political solidarity, economic cooperation, and socio-cultural relations.

The NAASP will promote practical cooperation between the two continents in areas such as trade, industry, investment, finance, tourism, information and communication technology, energy, health, transportation, agriculture, water resources and fisheries. It will also address issues of common concern such as, armed conflicts, weapons of mass destruction, transnational organized crimes and terrorism, which are fundamental to ensuring peace, stability, and security, human

resource development, enhanced capacity building and technical cooperation in order to create an enabling environment for the betterment of the regions. (20)

Many diplomatic documents and national statements emphasize that solidarity is the responsibility of each country, which must mobilize its resources, manage them and distribute them equitably among its respective citizens. There must be norms and there is an urgent need to promote the rule of law, including prescribed rights and obligations, as well as a credible and independent judiciary. States, individuals and peoples may prove that promoting the duty of solidarity and humanitarian cooperation takes precedence over geo-politics. This will prove to be a hard test not only for the humanitarian agencies working in the field, but also for all mechanisms of multilateral diplomacy which must help avoid chaotic modalities of action.

Asia is well involved in considering these topical ideas in multilateral forums. According to the Chairman's Statement of the 10th ASEAN Summit in Vientiane on 29 November 2004, ASEAN Leaders held a very productive meeting under the Theme "Advancing a Secure and Dynamic ASEAN Family through **Greater Solidarity**, Economic Integration and Social Progress". (emphasis added) Sustainable development was, certainly, analyzed under that generous theme. Bridging the development gap was considered extremely important for regional economic integration and a crucial part of confidence-building efforts to assist members to cope with existing challenges. (21)

More work has to be done. The ASEAN Declaration, better known as the Bangkok Declaration, signed on 8 August 1967, states that the signatories of this instrument are "mindful of the existence of mutual interests and common problems among countries of Southeast Asia and convinced of the need to further strengthen the existing bonds of regional solidarity and cooperation." In another declaration, signed in

Singapore on 28 January 1992, ASEAN countries agreed that "ASEAN should help hasten the development of a regional identity and solidarity." (22) An Eminent Persons Group (EPG) comprising ten highly distinguished and well respected citizens from ASEAN Member States will examine and provide in 2006 recommendations on the direction of ASEAN and the nature of the ASEAN Charter which will codify all ASEAN norms, rules, and values. There are reasons to believe that solidarity as a fundamental value of ASEAN will be properly reflected in the future Charter which will transform ASEAN from a loosely-organized political association into a rules-based legal regime. (23)

5. Suggestions for Further Action

A. Solidarity must be incorporated in national constitutions.

A good and promising example to be followed by interested countries in promoting solidarity is offered by the Constitution of the Swiss Confederation. It was agreed by the Federal Parliament on 18 December 1998 and adopted by compulsory dual majority public referendum on 18 April 1999. It came into force on January 1, 2000. Its Preamble says inter alia:

"The People and the Swiss Cantons, Conscious of their responsibility towards creation; Resolved to renew their alliance so as to strengthen liberty, democracy, independence and peace **in a spirit of solidarity** (emphasis added) and openness towards the world, Determined to live together with their diversities respecting each other and in equity, Conscious of their common achievements and of their duty to take responsibility for future generations, Knowing that only those remain free who use their freedom, and that the strength of a community is measured by the well being of its weakest members; Agree the Constitution which follows:..." (24)

The preamble of the Constitution of the Swiss

Confederation is relevant for the duty of solidarity both by the clear specific reference to the spirit of solidarity and by the emphasis on the duty to assume responsibility for future generations. This makes the correlation with the very concept of sustainable development also necessary.

The presence of the word duty in the fundamental legal act of Switzerland is significant in all respects. As reminded in 2005 by Swiss President Samuel Schmid at the Davos World Economic Forum, “the horror of the tsunami showed us the limits of what we imagined we could achieve. But it also showed us - for the first time in the history of the world - that global solidarity is possible. And that is a cause for hope: things are moving in the right direction. Humankind is moving towards humanity.” (25)

B. Education curricula should include provisions for teaching global solidarity.

The great German philosopher Georg Hegel asserted: “Education is the art of making man ethical.” (26) An ethical dialogue on the duty of solidarity as an imperative prerequisite of globalization may be fertilized by a permanent educational process. All countries have to consider how to humanize the present asymmetrical globalization. World summits are ad hoc diplomatic schools and indispensable instruments for useful exchanges of views on that cardinal objective.

2005 marked the start of the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (2005-2014) which provides a vital opportunity to putting solidarity on the path to sustainability. Education for solidarity must find a central place across the full spectrum of educational endeavors, if it is to offer the opportunity for all people to learn the values, behavior and lifestyles required for positive societal transformation. (27)

From UNESCO’s perspective, as a lead, agency, the Decade should focus on Key Action Themes such as: Quality Education; Environment,

Sustainable Consumption, Water, Sustainable Tourism, Overcoming Poverty, Human Rights, Rural Development, Gender Equality, Health Promotion, HIV/AIDS, Media & ICTs, Intercultural Understanding, Cultural Diversity, Indigenous knowledge. (28)

Solidarity is not specifically mentioned in the above list. However, one of the most important ways to focus and advance the value of solidarity is through education. All educators are able to advance initiatives and actions that can lead to concrete manifestations of solidarity in order to raise awareness and promote assistance for developing countries.

There is no doubt that education and formation/training are key arenas for teaching global solidarity. In that regard, it is necessary to integrate international concerns into curricula and programs of subjects such as geography, history and science classes. Educators can also find creative ways to reflect and act on the call to global solidarity, from principals and teachers who encourage their students to participate in relief programs to adult educators who host speakers on missions dealing with international issues

At the level of effective implementation, the demands of solidarity cannot be filled simply by an occasional gift or contribution, although generosity is normally demanded of all. Solidarity requires valid responses and initiatives on a continuous basis. It postulates imagination and creativity. Genuine commitment to global solidarity cannot be limited to financial aid or compassionate service efforts on a case by case ground. Pursuing justice is at the core of the call to solidarity. A much broader, truly universal and permanent sense of political responsibility is needed. Building peace, combating poverty and despair, and protecting human rights are not only moral imperatives, but also wise and crucial national priorities. (29)

C. The UN Secretary - General's reports on the implementation of the UN Summit's declarations should contain sections on the progress achieved in advancing global solidarity.

On December 14, 2000, the UN General Assembly adopted a draft resolution on the follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit by which it called for an integrated, coordinated, comprehensive and balanced approach in the implementation of the Millennium Declaration at the national, regional and international levels. By the terms of that resolution, the Secretary-General was requested to ensure system-wide coordination to assist with the implementation of the Declaration within the UN system. The Secretary-General was also requested to prepare a comprehensive report every five years, supplemented by an annual report on progress achieved towards implementing the Declaration.

In accordance with the requests of the UN General Assembly, the annual reports should reflect the broad array of specific goals and commitments enunciated in the Declaration. All reports should focus on the results and benchmarks achieved, identify gaps in implementation and strategies for reducing them, and highlight, in particular, cross-sectoral issues and cross-cutting themes on development and peace and security. Reports should also draw on the work of the entire UN, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization. The reporting system should be appraised with a view to strengthening its coherence and integration. (30)

The requested reports were submitted to and considered by the relevant UN bodies, but they did not contain specific, systematized references to the universal values proclaimed in the Millennium Declaration, including solidarity. That situation might be corrected in the years to come, as fundamental/universal values were re-affirmed in the UN World Summit Outcome Document,

adopted by consensus on September 16, 2005 and whose implementation is expected to inspire and determine further reports to be presented by the future UN Secretary General.

In the forthcoming reports, special attention should be paid *inter alia* to the efforts and achievements of the younger generation in promoting global solidarity and the peaceful transformation of conflict. Data and information are needed on ways and means to increase youth capacity to engage with issues of global solidarity; to build up synergies with the existing regional and global programs; to develop appropriate educational programs and resources for the promotion of global solidarity, with a particular focus on developing countries. These reports should encourage collective reflection under the motto **Opus Solidaritatis Pax**. Is it really topical?

A participant in the two-week long World Congress of Youth in Morocco (2003), whose theme was "Together for Tolerance, Solidarity, and Sustainable Development", confessed: "Little did I know what these words would come to mean." The goal of the Congress, with delegates from 154 countries, was to draft the "Casablanca Declaration," a unified world youth statement representing a common vision. The same participant admitted: "I had never felt the weight of history so deeply. The word solidarity was suddenly sour: solidarity means that you all think the same and act the same together, you are solidified as a group and therefore empowered to do far more than you could as an individual. Solidarity means mob mentality. Solidarity is dangerous." (31)

Yet, irrespective of the above individual views and interpretations, nobody can deny that economic globalization assumes and requires the globalization of solidarity. In that spirit, a progressive youth organization, "feels not only a strong commitment to the important task of global solidarity and sustainable development, but also expresses its strongest belief that without sustainable development there will be no future for our

and further generations.” (32)

Indeed, this has to be recognized as both a moral and political imperative. In his 1998 World Day of Peace address, Pope John Paul II reminded: “The challenge, in short, is to ensure a globalization of solidarity, a globalization without marginalization.” (33)

D. Consideration should be given to establishing a World Solidarity Institutions Organization

The idea of establishing a World Solidarity Institutions Organization was formulated in 2004. The initial author of this suggestion was Jacques Attali, a French writer and thinker, president of PlaNet Finance. He was founding president of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the top aide to former French President Francois Mitterrand.

Jacques Attali believes that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) bring some sense to globalization, which, without them, is often only a landscape of markets and wars. NGOs bring to the table of military and economic might the concepts of global governance, the rights of future generations, social equality and women’s and minority’s rights. The NGOs invented the concept of sustainable development. They are the leaders in the fight for the protection of the diversity of species, languages and cultures and against global warming. And they have taken the lead in tackling poverty by setting up microcredit institutions across the world. These NGOs may be called “solidarity institutions”.

A new name is not sufficient. To achieve their potential, “solidarity institutions” must become more professional in their administration and more transparent in their financing and governance.

The proposal is not meant to produce duplications. Since a UN General Assembly already exists, and since corporations have thousands of places to meet, solidarity institutions should also

have their own forum. In that respect, it was proposed that the annual NGO summit at the UN should become institutional and autonomous: a UN of NGOs, or rather a World Solidarity Institutions Organization-the WSIO.

Jacques Attali estimates that such an organization should seek to define goals for action for the next 15 years alongside governments and corporations. Every country should offer tax credits to those who devote time to working with solidarity institutions; companies should offer paid leave for such activities.

Advancing the above ideas is not an easy task. There was no real follow-up for the above suggestion/proposal. However, nobody can deny the fact that NGOs have demonstrated their capacity to have an impact on the world. And now the world needs them more than ever. Therefore, due attention should be paid to formalizing their role in global governance. And the conclusion is crystal-clear: “It is time to do so because time is running out. Our future is too important to leave to governments and corporations alone.” (34)

Even without being officially involved on matters under consideration by NGOs, diplomacy cannot be indifferent to such far-reaching suggestions. On the contrary, there is an urgent need for multilateral diplomacy to work on a consensus and thus contribute to the universal acceptance of global solidarity as an imperative prerequisite of an authentic sustainable development.

6. Moderate Optimism

Faced with modest results, globalization of solidarity may sound as a very distant ideal, but the specific objectives in the relevant fields pursued through the channels of multilateral diplomacy are part of a continuum. The establishment of the World Solidarity Fund on the basis of the proposal made by Tunisia in 1999 and which was finally adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 20, 2002, reflects a tangible commitment to anchor the principles of justice, solidarity

and sustainable development in the real world. This Fund, which has already become a UN mechanism, requires that all the members of the international community, including governments, civil societies and private sectors, join their efforts so as to promptly mobilize the financial resources necessary for its activities. (35)

The Group of 77 and China reiterated on November 15, 2004 the important potential contribution of the World Solidarity Fund to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, in particular the objective to halve, by 2015, the proportion of people living on less than one dollar a day and the proportion of the people who suffer from hunger. (36)

On December 23, 2005 the UN General Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution proclaiming December 20 as **International Human Solidarity Day**. The decision has a symbolic significance as in the same resolution 191 countries stressed by consensus the importance of the World Solidarity Fund and called on Member States to make the Fund operational by inviting them as well as the international organizations, the private sector, the foundations and all potential donors to contribute to the Fund. The Assembly emphasized that international cooperation is vital in supplementing developing countries' efforts to use their domestic resources for development and poverty eradication, together with coherent and consistent domestic policies. Each country is primarily responsible for its own sustainable development. Appropriate national policies and development strategies, concerted and concrete measures are needed to enable developing countries to eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development. (37)

Even if many people have solid reasons to be disappointed that not everything that was expected to take place in the fascinating field of sustainable development was achieved, given the present complex and turbulent political context, the general outcome is, nevertheless, modestly promising.

A most relevant example is that of March 1, 2006. French President Jacques Chirac proposed the establishment of a Leading Group on Development Solidarity, which will work to expand international support for surcharges on airline tickets, as mentioned above in the present study. The French Government will host the permanent secretariat of the Group, and will encourage all concerned institutions to keep working on that issue in close cooperation with interested international and non-governmental organizations, including, of course, the UN. Twelve countries announced to be favorable to the application of a tax on plane tickets, for the financing of the fight against the HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis in poor countries. (38)

However, there is no reason for euphoria. Many international conferences are still quite frustrating for public opinion, even when they facilitate a significant and fruitful dialogue on global issues.

In order to obtain better results, it is necessary to reinforce all institutional capacities to analyze and distribute relevant information on sustainable development. At the same time there is a need to optimize communication of the *principles of sustainable development* to key sectors of the population in every region. All participants in such an endeavor must be adequately equipped to illustrate the impact of individual and collective choices on development at different levels. They should be inspired to organize new actions in order to increase mobilization for solidarity initiatives and to implement additional measures and educational projects aimed at encouraging the public to support sustainable development.

It is true but not enough to re-affirm that "There is an intrinsic unity between solidarity and sustainability. Neither one can be achieved without the other. Like the two sides of the same coin, or the two wings of a bird, both are necessary for sustainable human development." (39)

Therefore, the real battles today are to win

hearts, minds, and opinions to treat and acknowledge the duty of solidarity as an imperative prerequisite of sustainable development. Without appropriate means to convince and influence decision-makers and public opinion to accept this basic truth, multilateral diplomacy risks to be relegated to a marginal position. (40) Without the fundamental tools needed for promoting solidarity, developing the planet in a sustainable way is impossible. (41)

This significant truth was re-affirmed by the EU in persuasive terms. Indeed, sustainable development means meeting the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is a fundamental objective of the EU. Sustainable development is about safeguarding the earth's capacity to support life in all its diversity. It is based on democracy, gender equality, solidarity, the rule of law and respect for fundamental rights. While positive achievements have been made in this respect, many challenges remain. The European Council therefore adopted an ambitious and comprehensive renewed EU Strategy for Sustainable Development, mentioned at the beginning of the present study, whose implementation will be closely monitored and followed up on a regular basis. (42)

In that context, the European Council cogently emphasized that universities, research institutes and private enterprises all have an essential role to play in promoting research that supports efforts to ensure that economic growth and environmental protection reinforce each other. Universities and other higher education institutions have a key role in providing education and training that equip the qualified workforce with the necessary competences to fully develop and exploit sustainable technologies. They should also contribute to low environmental impact management through interdisciplinary approaches and by building on existing networks. Creation of partnerships and cooperation between European and third country uni-

versities and higher education institutions, encouraging networking and peer learning, should be promoted. (43) That is topical for all continents.

In Asia, unions and civil society groups are urging governments of the ten members of ASEAN to adopt a wide-ranging Social Charter to "integrate a strong, social protection element into economic development that is founded on redistributive justice, poverty eradication and growth with equity and non-discrimination". Relevant proposals have been presented through a working group symbolically entitled SAPA - *Solidarity for Asian People's Advocacy*. SAPA calls for skills and training development and cooperation and exchange in science and technology research and development to ensure sustainable development and equitable growth. (44)

These demands are quite topical, as the UN admits that many of the aims of Agenda 21 are off target. Agenda 21 is the conventional name given to a comprehensive plan of action to be implemented globally, nationally and locally by institutions of the UN system, by governments and other entities in every area in which human beings impact on the environment. The UN Commission on Sustainable Development acknowledged that progress towards the goals of the Rio de Janeiro Conference on Environment and Development (1992) has been slower than anticipated, and in some respects conditions are actually worse than they were in the recent past.

The ASEAN's member states, for their part, envisage "a clean and green ASEAN" by 2020. By that year, ASEAN wants "fully established mechanisms for sustainable development to ensure the protection of the region's environment, the sustainability of its natural resources and the high quality of life of its peoples". It should be recalled that solidarity is an integral part of ASEAN strategy on youth. In ASEAN documents, enhancement of solidarity appears as a central objective of its youth development programs. It is rewarding to find out that the final

call contained in the Plan of Action for ASEAN Youth Development is to “Further encourage ASEAN youth exchange programs with the purpose of strengthening ASEAN awareness and solidarity.” (45)

All these events and documents illustrate a growing and promising consensus at governmental and non-governmental levels to better concentrate efforts for building a sustainable society in which economic, social and environmental goals go hand in hand and strengthen one another in a positive development. A sustainable society should be characterized by proactive solidarity between present and future generations and between all members of the world community of nations, in conformity with the requirements of authentic humanism. Implementing sustainable development in a spirit of solidarity on all levels could reflect a “dimensionality for all of us”, to use the appropriate terminology of UNESCO.

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